

of the citizens of the small country who are only seeking what we sometimes take so much for granted. So I especially want to thank them.

I also want to thank the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Senator CORKER, who also was very involved in getting this through.

So, Mr. President, if there is objection—and I note that the Senator from Kentucky is on the floor, and I will say before I read this, if there is objection, you are achieving the objectives of Vladimir Putin. You are achieving the objectives of trying to dismember this small country that has already been the subject of an attempted coup.

I have no idea why anyone would object to this, except that I will say, if they object, they are now carrying out the desires and ambitions of Vladimir Putin, and I do not say that lightly.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE  
CALENDAR

So, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at a time to be determined by the majority leader, in consultation with the Democratic leader, the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar No. 1, Montenegro, Treaty Document No. 114-12; that the treaty be considered as having advanced through the various parliamentary stages up to and including the presentation of the resolution of ratification; that any committee declarations be agreed to as applicable; that there be no amendments in order to the treaty or the resolution of ratification; that there be 2 hours for debate, equally divided in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of time, the Senate proceed to vote on the resolution; that any statements be printed in the RECORD; that if the resolution of ratification is agreed to, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that if the resolution is not agreed to, the treaty be returned to the calendar, and that there be no motions or points of order in order other than a motion to reconsider; and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kentucky.

Mr. PAUL. I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Arizona.

Mr. McCain. Mr. President, I note the Senator from Kentucky is leaving the floor without justification or any rationale for the action he has just taken. It is really remarkable that a Senator is blocking a treaty that is supported by an overwhelming number—perhaps 98, at least, of his colleagues. To come to the floor and object and walk away—walk away—the only conclusion that can be drawn when he walks away is that he has no argument to be made. He has no justification for his objection to having a small nation that is under assault from the Russians be part of NATO.

So I repeat again: The Senator from Kentucky is now working for Vladimir Putin.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Hampshire.

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I just have to follow up on Senator McCain's comments. How disappointing it is that we saw the Senator from Kentucky come to the floor to object to something that is clearly in the national security interests of this country—to support Montenegro's accession to NATO. It is in Europe's interest, in Montenegro's interest, and it is in America's interest.

I have to agree with Senator McCain. He is working in support of Russia's interests in America or he is holding this hostage for something that is totally unrelated to what we are doing with Montenegro's accession into NATO. In either case, it is totally inappropriate.

When are people in the Senate going to stop holding hostage things that are totally unrelated to the work on the floor of the Senate and start acting like adults and doing what we ought to be doing in this body? It is so hard to understand why somebody is here doing that, and, you know, I am disappointed that he is not willing to come to the floor and say why he is holding this up. If he has a good reason, he should be here talking about that reason, and let's see if we can find a compromise. But if he is not willing to come to the floor and talk about it, what does that mean? What does that mean for the future of this kind of treaty? And what is Montenegro's right to self-determination and our national security interests? It is just unfathomable.

So I am going—I think we should all keep coming to the floor on a regular basis, and I am hopeful that if we do that, we will eventually be able to find out what Senator Paul's objection is and address that because we can't let this stay in limbo in perpetuity.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Maryland.

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. President, I want to underscore one point here because people watching this may not understand the specific request that Senator McCain made.

What Senator McCain asked is that this resolution be brought to the floor of the U.S. Senate with debate and vote. Every Member can voice their views and then vote up or down. Senator McCain is absolutely right: On a vote there are going to be 97, 98, maybe even more Senators voting in favor of this resolution. I hope it is 100 at the end of the day. But we have one Senator objecting to the consideration.

We have to have some democratic principles here. This is a national security issue. I think we should underscore the point of what Senator McCain was requesting. He didn't ask unanimous consent that it be passed; it is unanimous consent that we have a chance to vote on it.

Each of us could have cast our vote and expressed our views. We are not denying any Senator the right to be heard on this issue or to cast their vote on this issue. It is disappointing that one Senator is holding this issue up, and it is affecting our national security.

I yield the floor.

Mr. McCain. Mr. President, I thank my colleagues, and I know I speak for 90-some U.S. Senators with a message to the brave people of Montenegro who are upholding democracy, who have fought against a coup that would have overthrown their government, who cherish freedom, who cherish the alliance that it has held so long for so many years.

We will not stop until we ratify your entrance into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. I pledge to the people of Montenegro that Senator SHAHEEN, Senator CARDIN, and I, and many other Senators, will not stop until this resolution is passed and we can strengthen not only Montenegro the nation and NATO, but the region.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

Mr. CARDIN. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### SUBSTANCE MISUSE CRISIS

Ms. HASSAN. Mr. President, I rise to deliver my first official speech on the Senate floor. I begin by saying how deeply grateful I am to the people of New Hampshire for the great trust they have bestowed upon me.

I come from a State that combines rugged individualism with a strong sense of community. It is what I often call our "all hands on deck" approach, where we come together, we pitch in, and we help our friends and neighbors when they need it.

Right now, we see this approach each and every day with those on the front lines of our State's devastating substance misuse crisis. Law enforcement officials, medical professionals, and citizens in every corner of our State work together to try to turn the tide of this deadly epidemic. The heroin, opioid, and fentanyl crisis is the most pressing public health and safety challenge facing New Hampshire. This epidemic takes a massive toll on our communities, our workforce, and our economy, and I know it is ravaging other States all across our Nation too.

This crisis does not discriminate. It affects people in every community and from all walks of life. In 2016 alone, roughly 500 people in New Hampshire lost their lives as a result of this epidemic, and the spread of synthetic drugs, like fentanyl, is increasing dramatically the number of lives lost and

is killing people faster with smaller amounts of drugs. Last year, more than 70 percent of confirmed New Hampshire drug deaths involved fentanyl. Lives are at stake, so every Member of this body must come together and put partisan politics aside to get results for our people.

The people of my State have a long tradition of sharing their stories and making their priorities known to the elected officials who represent them, and everywhere I go, I hear stories from those who have been affected by this crisis. I hear inspiring stories from those in recovery who are working to put their lives back together, and I hear tragic stories from siblings, parents, and friends who know the pain of having a loved one taken from them far too soon. All of these stories are critical in breaking down the stigma of addiction and pushing for solutions. Instead of simply writing in an obituary that a loved one died suddenly, more and more families, including the families of one of my son's high school classmates, are speaking out and telling the painful stories of addiction and loss.

Last year, at our annual Easter egg hunt that I hosted as Governor, I was approached by a woman on our statehouse lawn who was carrying a baby. After I took a picture and I admired the baby, she pulled me aside and said the little boy she was holding was not her son but her grandson and that his mother had died from an overdose 1 month earlier. She was there on the day before Easter, as we celebrated our spring ritual of renewal and hope, and shared that pain with me so we could move forward to help others in her situation.

Just this week, on Monday, I met with a man named Phil, from Laconia, who is now in recovery. Phil said that over a year and a half ago, he had lost his home and nearly everything because of his substance use disorder. Now, thanks, in part, to the fact that he was able to gain coverage through the Affordable Care Act's Medicaid expansion, Phil is substance-free. He has gone on to become a recovery coach, and he helped found a recovery center in Laconia, where he works to help others with the same challenges he had.

We can never thank those in recovery and the families who have lost loved ones enough for speaking out about this issue and for working tirelessly and courageously to try to prevent others from suffering as they have, but while thanking them is appropriate, it is not enough. The bravery of survivors and those in recovery needs to be marked by our constant vigilance and by urgent action.

I am grateful to the Senators who have been true leaders on this issue, especially my fellow Senator from New Hampshire, JEANNE SHAHEEN, who has fought tirelessly to secure funding to combat this crisis and help the people of our State. The passage of the Com-

prehensive Addiction and Recovery Act was an important step, as was the 21st Century Cures Act, which included some funding to fight the opioid epidemic. The Cures Act will not provide enough funding for our State, and I will continue fighting, alongside Senator SHAHEEN, to ensure that the Federal Government provides New Hampshire with the resources we need.

I am pleased there has been bipartisan support for combating this crisis in the Senate, but we must continue to work together at all levels of government and with those on the front lines to battle this crisis.

During my time as a member of the National Governors Association, I worked with my fellow Governors from both parties to push for steps, including passing emergency Federal funding to support States' efforts to combat this crisis, and at the State level in New Hampshire, we proved that we could come together to implement a comprehensive, "all hands on deck" strategy to support those on the front lines and help save lives.

During my time as Governor, we secured \$5 million in additional State funding for treatment, prevention, recovery, and housing programs. We worked together to provide law enforcement with additional resources through a program called Operation Granite Hammer. We expanded drug courts throughout New Hampshire, and we worked to crack down on fentanyl. In order to prevent the overprescribing of opioids, we took steps to improve provider training and update the rules for prescribers.

Critically, Republicans and Democrats put their differences aside and came together to pass and reauthorize the New Hampshire Health Protection Program, also known as Medicaid expansion. Passing and reauthorizing this program included healthy debate and, at times, heated argument. What matters is that after those debates, we were able to take this essential step forward to continue strengthening our families, our businesses, and our economy.

Medicaid expansion is providing quality, affordable health coverage to over 50,000 Granite Staters, including coverage for behavioral, health, and substance use disorder treatment. Thousands of people have received addiction treatment after gaining coverage through the Medicaid expansion program in New Hampshire. What is clear and what I hear from people in recovery centers all across my State is that lives are being changed and saved as a result of Medicaid expansion.

Take, for example, Ashley, of Dover, NH. I first met Ashley at the Farnum Center in Manchester, and I have been inspired by her story ever since. Ashley is living proof of the positive impact of Medicaid expansion.

Ashley had struggled for nearly a decade with heroin addiction, during which time she was arrested, her husband died from an overdose, and she

lost the custody of her young child. Yet, as a result of her courage, perseverance, and the treatment she received for her substance use disorder under Medicaid expansion, Ashley's story is one of progress. She has been in recovery for over a year. She is employed, is working at Safe Harbor Recovery Center to help others who are struggling with addiction, and has moved to employer-sponsored insurance coverage.

It was an honor to have Ashley attend the President's joint address to Congress as my guest of honor, and I will continue to carry her story with me in these Chambers and beyond.

It is not just in New Hampshire. Republican Governors and some of my Republican colleagues in the Senate have made clear just how critical Medicaid expansion is to their States. As the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities has found, 2.8 million people with substance use disorders, including 220,000 with opioid disorders, have coverage under the Affordable Care Act. That is real and essential progress, but we know we have far more work to do. I am committed to working with Members of both parties in the Senate to continue building on these efforts.

What we cannot afford to do, however, is to allow a partisan agenda to pull us backward. I am extremely concerned about the effect that legislation introduced by House Republicans last week—also known as TrumpCare—would have on our efforts to combat substance misuse. Make no mistake, this legislation would end Medicaid expansion, which experts have said is the most important tool available to fight the substance misuse crisis. This plan also cuts and caps the traditional Medicaid Program, which means States will be forced to either raise taxes or cut eligibility and services.

As a former Governor, I know full well the impact the decisions in Washington can have on our communities. Repealing Medicaid expansion and capping traditional Medicaid would severely hurt the ability of those on the front lines to save lives and combat this deadly epidemic.

Substance use disorder treatment providers have been clear that if Medicaid expansion is repealed, they will have to significantly cut back on the help they can provide to those in need. To pull the rug out from millions of people across the country who are seeking a lifeline from the throes of addiction is unconscionable. We cannot let that happen.

In addition to making the substance misuse crisis worse, TrumpCare would affect countless others across New Hampshire and America, from individuals who buy their own insurance who would see their premiums skyrocket to older Americans who would now be forced to pay an age tax, to women and families who would be hurt by the provision that defunds Planned Parenthood.

We know there is more work to do to improve and build on the Affordable

Care Act, but this TrumpCare bill is not the answer, and I am working with my colleagues to fight against this legislation.

Furthermore, I am working on additional legislation that would help combat this substance misuse crisis. I joined Senator PORTMAN in introducing the STOP Act, bipartisan legislation that would help stop dangerous synthetic drugs like fentanyl and carfentanyl from being shipped through our borders to drug traffickers here in the United States. These synthetic drugs are only making this crisis more dangerous, causing a spike in deaths in New Hampshire and across the Nation. We must do everything possible to stop them from entering our country.

I joined a bipartisan group of colleagues, led by Senator KLOBUCHAR, to introduce the SALTS Act, which would empower law enforcement to crack down on synthetic substances and better prosecute drug traffickers.

I also joined Senators MANCHIN, SHAHEEN, and several of our colleagues to reintroduce the LifeBOAT Act, which would establish a permanent funding stream to provide and expand access to substance misuse treatment.

These are essential steps we need to take now. I will also continue evaluating additional legislative steps to support treatment, prevention, recovery, and law enforcement efforts. We know the road ahead will not be easy. The scourge of addiction requires us, at times, to change the way we have always done things at a quicker pace than is sometimes comfortable but that can never be an excuse for inaction.

Every day, I am reminded of the stories like those of the grandmother I met at the annual Easter egg hunt, Phil's and Ashley's, and those of the thousands in my State who continue to feel the impacts of a crisis that is taking far too many lives. By making their voices heard, citizens in New Hampshire are breaking through the stigma of addiction and, in turn, are helping others seek the treatment and recovery they need. It is incumbent upon all of us to ensure that those critical services are there for them.

We must all continue to speak up and fight for those who are voiceless and those who continue to struggle. We must reach out and work toward policies that can truly make a difference because often when we reach out, people reach back, but if we are silent or if we allow the rug to be pulled out from under those seeking help, this epidemic will only get worse. It will devastate even further our families, our communities, and our businesses.

I am going to continue to fight to make progress, and I am willing to work with anyone to help those struggling to get the treatment they need and to support all of the dedicated professionals who are on the frontlines of battling this crisis. We will have to continue to fight together, each and

every one of us, every single day, to build on our efforts to combat this epidemic, and by working together, we can and we will stem and turn the tide.

Thank you, Mr. President.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). The Senator from New Hampshire.

#### CONGRATULATING SENATOR HASSAN

Mrs. SHAHEEN. Mr. President, I just wanted to say how pleased I am to be able to join my colleague from New Hampshire on the floor for her official maiden address. It is so nice to see so many of our women colleagues here for this as well.

As she pointed out, I just wanted to echo the great work Senator HASSAN has done, especially as Governor, in expanding the Medicaid Program in New Hampshire so that it provides treatment for so many people, especially when it comes to the heroin and opioid epidemic, and why we are so concerned about any efforts to roll that back—because that would kick thousands of people in New Hampshire off of treatment with nowhere else to go. I certainly plan to continue to join her as we fight for this effort, and I know our colleagues are going to help us in that. I believe that if we all work together, we can make progress, as she has so eloquently stated.

So congratulations to Senator HASSAN for her first official maiden speech. I know it will be just one of many more to come.

(The remarks of Mrs. SHAHEEN pertaining to the submission of S. 630 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Mrs. SHAHEEN. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### REPUBLICAN HEALTHCARE BILL

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, last week Republicans in the House released a bill to repeal the Affordable Care Act and cut Medicaid to the bone. On Tuesday, the Congressional Budget Office—those are the independent budget experts who analyze policies under consideration here in Congress—estimated that the plan would rip health insurance coverage away from 24 million Americans and cut \$880 billion in the Medicaid program. And as a bonus, the plan provides hundreds of billions of dollars in tax breaks for the rich. Who comes up with a plan like this? What kind of healthcare bill has, as its central feature, ripping away

health insurance from tens of millions of American citizens?

What kind of politician thinks they were sent to Congress to destroy the financial stability of millions of middle-class families and give wealthy donors a tax break that they certainly don't need? Who thinks that the central problem in America is that middle-class families have too much healthcare coverage and that the richest people in America need government to hand them more money? There is no other way to say it: This bill is just part of a Republican plan to help the rich get richer and kick dirt in everyone else's face.

This bill is an economic disaster, and at its center, it is cruel—cancer survivors losing coverage, seniors facing premium increases of \$12,000 a year, people with disabilities forced into nursing homes. And one of the cruelest things is what this bill will do to individuals, to families, and to communities struggling with the opioid crisis.

Last year in Massachusetts, nearly 2,000 people died from opioid use. That is more than double the number who died in 2013. That is right, double. Between 2014 and 2015, Massachusetts had a bigger jump in its death rate from drug overdoses than any other State except North Dakota.

Last week, I was on the front lines in Lynn Community Health Center, where dedicated staffers are trying to meet this opioid epidemic head on. This week, I went to Manet Community Health Center, where a coordinated team in Quincy is battling the opioid crisis. While I was there, I not only met with the professionals, I saw the mamas and the babies, the people who are in recovery, and people who reach out to those who are still in the grip of drugs. The opioid crisis isn't happening to someone else's family or in someone else's community. It is happening to our families in our communities, and we need to do more to stop this plague before it takes another of our loved ones.

We need to do more; what we absolutely cannot do is less. We cannot take away the resources already committed to fighting the opioid crisis so that some millionaire can get a tax break. Current law, the ACA, requires all insurance plans to cover substance use disorder treatment and prevention as an essential health benefit. That means that your insurance company can't turn off the access to treatment just when you need it most by saying: Sorry, we just don't cover that. Current law, the ACA, gave people the chance to get that insurance through health exchanges and subsidies. Millions more people got private insurance. And through Medicaid expansion, millions more were covered by Medicaid. So there it is, our first line of defense in the war on opioid addiction.

The ACA currently means that more people are covered, and that coverage includes substance abuse treatment. What does the Republican plan do? It